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ABSTRACT

A study was made to validate the Annehurst Curriculum Classification System (ACCS--a means of classifying, organizing, storing, and retrieving curriculum materials in terms of human characteristics) as a practical and feasible means of identifying gifted/talented (GT) students. Sixty elementary teachers, both from districts with and without programs for GT students, were asked to identify three students they each had taught or were teaching whom they considered GT. An ACCS form was completed for each student and compared with that student's rating on the Scale for Rating Behavior Characteristics of Superior Students (SRBCSS). Preliminary analysis of the data indicated that the ACCS learner characteristics were comparable to the characteristics identified in the SRBCSS, suggesting that the adaptation of the learner characteristics as used in this study could eventually serve as a useful tool in identifying GT students. Among other findings was that previous knowledge of criteria for selection of GT programs had little effect upon teacher ratings, and that school environment (suburban or rural) had no effect on teacher perceptions for both scales. It was also concluded, among other things, that the ACCS could be used to identify curriculum materials appropriate for use with GT students. (DLS)

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The identification of gifted learners has surfaced as one of the more immediate problems in contemporary education. The assumption that identification procedures evolve from definitions of "gifted" is only partially correct. Gifted is usually defined as intellectual excellence or I.Q. (Newland, 1976). By limiting classification to only the intellectual domain, however, other appropriate identification characteristics are omitted, such as creativity.

Various devices and techniques are now being used to identify gifted students including: teacher observation and nomination (teacher perception); group achievement scores, individual intelligence test scores; creativity test scores (Gallagher, 1975). In addition, a rating scale, Scale for Rating Behavior Characteristics of Superior Students (SRBCSS) designed by Renzulli (1971) has become a popular tool for use by the public schools for identifying gifted/talented students. SRBCSS is an objective instrument designed to help teachers systematically identify students who may be gifted/talented. The most common form of the instrument identifies four major categories of student characteristics: learning characteristics, creative characteristics; motivational characteristics; leadership characteristics. Reliability and validity studies indicate that SRBCSS is both a reliable and valid instrument for identification of gifted/talented students (Renzulli, 1971).

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The Annehurst Curriculum Classification System (ACCS) has recently emerged as a means of classifying, organizing, storing and retrieving curriculum materials in terms of human characteristics (Frymier, 1977). One of the primary functions of ACCS is to assist teachers in identifying human factors which affect learning. The clustering or categorization of these human factors enables teachers to assess individual potential for learning. The six categories of learner characteristics identified by ACCS are: experience, motivation, intelligence, emotional/personality factors, social factors, and creativity. Because of the nature of ACCS, it was felt, by the researchers, that this system had potential as an identification measure for recognizing gifted/talented students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to validate the Annehurst Curriculum Classification System (ACCS) as a practical and feasible means of identifying gifted/talented students.

Procedures

Subjects

The subjects of this study were sixty elementary classroom teachers selected from two different geographical locations. One-half (30) of the group were teachers randomly selected from a rural school district in Southern Ohio. This district does not have an identified program or curricula for gifted/talented students. The other half of the group were teachers randomly selected from a suburban type area in Central Florida which has a program for gifted/talented students.

Data Collection

Each teacher in the study was asked to identify three (3) students they had taught or were teaching whom they considered gifted/talented students.

A SRBCSS form and an ACCS form were completed for each student (within a six week interval), thus obtaining 180 student profiles for each instrument. Data collection was completed by November, 1978.

Profiles were examined to determine if they were properly coded for matching SRBCSS profiles to ACCS profiles for each student. Only 126 of the 180 student profiles for each instrument were usable; 87 from Central Florida and 39 from Southern Ohio.

Instruments

Although Renzulli (1971) has identified ten categories of characteristics of gifted/taleneted students, his Scale for Rating Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students, (SRBCSS) incorporates only four of those categories: learning; motivation; creativity; leadership. Each category of the instrument contains 8-10 descriptive items which the teacher rated on a scale of 1-4 in accordance with the degree to which the behavior had been observed by the teacher. A rating of 1 on an item would indicate that the behavior was seldom or never observed, while a rating of 4 would indicate that the behavior was observed almost all the time. Mean scores were computed for each category.

The Annehurst Curriculum Classification System (ACCS) consists of six categories of learner characteristics: experience; motivation; intelligence; emotional/personality factors; social factors; creativity. Each category consisted of 7-10 descriptive items which the teacher would mark as "high" or "low" according to the degree of the behavior observed by the teacher. Since ACCS used a different "rating" procedure than SRBCSS, adjustments were made in the ACCS rating procedures to correspond with those of SRBCSS. A 1-4 rating system was used instead of the "high" or "low" method. Mean scores were computed for each category of ACCS.

Data Analysis

Mean scores and standard deviations were computed for each category on both the SRBCSS and ACCS and appropriate comparisons between categories was made using a t-test for grouped data. Tables 1-4 summarize the findings of the study.

Mean scores for the ACCS profiles are found in Table 1. There were no significant differences in mean scores between the ratings of teachers in Central Florida and those of teachers in Southern Ohio on any of the categories of ACCS.

Table 2 indicates a similar pattern when scores on the SRBCSS profiles are compared. There are no significant differences in teachers' ratings on each category of the SRBCSS.

Tables 3 and 4 summarize the comparison of scores between the ACCS categories and the SRBCSS categories. Since ACCS contained six categories and the SRBCSS contained only four, the categories were analyzed to determine which categories would be appropriate comparisons. The researchers decided that the items listed in the ACCS categories identified as Experience and Intelligence corresponded with those listed in the Learning category of the SRBCSS; consequently, the ACCS categories of Experience and Intelligence were collapsed into one category for comparison purposes. Likewise, the ACCS categories of Emotional/Personality Factors and Social Factors were collapsed and compared with the SRBCSS category of Leadership.

Again, there were no significant differences in mean scores between categories.

Although the correlational analysis does not reveal high correlation coefficients (See Table 5) as would be expected from the mean scores, the correlational coefficients are statistically significant for each category.

The difference in level of significance between the Florida group and the Ohio group is attributed to the difference in N's. Further analysis of the correlational data is expected at this time. The researchers are assuming that the low ratios, although statistically significant, are due to variations in ratings by teachers on the individual items. This assumption needs to be further investigated.

All data was analyzed using the Statistical Analysis System Program at the University of Central Florida.

Discussion

Preliminary analysis of the data collected indicates that the ACCS learner characteristics are comparable to the characteristics identified in the SRBCSS, consequently, the researchers believe that the adaptation of the learner characteristics as used in this study could eventually serve as a useful tool by classroom teachers in identifying gifted/talented students.

Additional conclusions drawn by the researchers include:

1) Previous knowledge of criterion for selection of gifted/talented programs had little effect upon the teachers ratings of gifted/talented students. This conclusion was drawn by studying the comparison of data presented in Tables 1 and 2. Teachers from Florida (where a gifted/program has been in operation) did not rate children differently on either instrument than did the teachers from Ohio (where no program has been established).

2) Teachers perceived students the same way on both the ACCS and SRBCSS instruments regardless of whether the teachers taught in a rural area (Southern Ohio) or in a suburban-type area (Central Florida).

3) When adapting the ACCS learner characteristics scale to a form paralleling the rating process for SRBCSS, the researchers decided to list the learner characteristics without identifying the categories to which they

belonged (e.g. creativity, motivation, etc.). This procedure was used to determine if teachers are influenced in their ratings when confronted with categories of behaviors clearly identified as important for the identification of gifted/talented students. Since there are no significant differences in the mean scores between categories of the ACCS and SRBCSS, the researchers concluded that teachers are not influenced by categorical titles and are more concerned about specific behavioral observations.

Since ACCS proved to be a potentially viable tool for the identification of gifted/talented students, additional usefulness of ACCS in the classroom is evident:

1) ACCS could be used to identify curriculum materials appropriate for use with gifted/talented students.

2) ACCS could be useful to teachers when designing IEP's (Individualized Education Programs) for the gifted/talented students. Curriculum materials could easily be selected to match the needs of the gifted/talented students and appropriately incorporated into the IEP's.

3) Knowledge of ACCS could help the pre-service and in-service teachers plan for individualized instruction for the gifted/talented students enrolled in their regular classrooms who have no access to special programs.

4) Once students and materials are analyzed using ACCS, teachers, supervisors, media specialists, and principals, might be better able to determine the type of materials and resources they need for their school to maximize the potential learning of the gifted/talented students.

Limitations and Recommendations

As the researchers proceeded with the study several concerns developed:

1) A portion of the data was lost because of coding problems. The

study needs to be repeated to provide a larger data base, and proper attention needs to be focused on the coding of the instruments. Precoding of all data sheets should be done by the researchers to prevent data loss.

2) Although teachers were asked to select and rate children whom they felt were gifted/talented, no attempt was made to determine if the children really were qualified for gifted/talented programs. The assumption was made that teachers in the Florida population would select students already enrolled in the gifted program to classify; however, the researchers have no way of substantiating this. Additional research in this area should include provisions for verifying teacher selections where gifted/talented programs exist.

3) The analytical procedures used in this study did not address potential differences in the individual items of the categories of each instrument. The data should be subjected to more rigorous analyses before ACCS is adapted as an instrument for identifying gifted/talented students.

4) This study was limited to teachers' ratings of elementary students. Similar studies should be conducted at the junior and senior high school levels to determine if teachers perceptions of gifted/talent students are consistent over various age and maturity levels.

TABLE 1

COMPARISON OF ACCS MEAN SCORES

CHARACTERISTICS	CENTRAL FLORIDA		SOUTHERN OHIO		df	t	p
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD			
Experience	3.21	.81	3.22	.85	124	.059	NS
Intelligence	3.22	.90	3.31	1.00	124	.450	NS
Motivation	3.03	.93	3.12	1.01	124	.451	NS
Creativity	2.98	.92	2.97	1.14	124	.176	NS
Emotional	3.04	.85	3.01	.98	124	.050	NS
Social	2.82	1.11	2.80	1.29	124	.089	NS

TABLE 2

COMPARISON OF SRBCSS MEAN SCORES

CHARACTERISTICS	CENTRAL FLORIDA		SOUTHERN OHIO		df	t	p
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD			
Learning	3.16	.86	3.38	.69	124	1.428	NS
Motivation	2.80	.81	3.05	.69	124	1.428	NS
Creativity	2.74	.78	2.84	.65	124	.769	NS
Leadership	3.11	.82	3.09	.74	124	.666	NS

TABLE 3

COMPARISON OF MEAN SCORES

CENTRAL FLORIDA
N=87

CHARACTERISTICS	SRBCSS		ACCS				
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t	p
Learning (Experience & Intelligence)	3.16	.86	3.21	.85	86	.384	NS
Motivation	2.80	.81	3.03	.91	86	1.538	NS
Creativity	2.74	.78	2.98	.92	86	1.537	NS
Leadership (Emotional & Social)	3.11	.82	2.98	.97	86	1.428	NS

TABLE 4

COMPARISON OF MEAN SCORES

SOUTHERN OHIO
N=39

CHARACTERISTICS	SRBCSS		ACCS				
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t	p
Learning (Experience & Intelligence)	3.38	.69	3.26	.97	38	.294	NS
Motivation	3.05	.69	3.12	1.01	38	.526	NS
Creativity	2.84	.65	2.97	1.14	38	.500	NS
Leadership (Emotional & Social)	3.09	.74	2.90	1.13	38	.685	NS

TABLE 5

CORRELATION RATIOS

CATEGORIES	CENTRAL FLORIDA N=87		SOUTHERN OHIO N=39	
	r	p <	r	p <
Learning (Experience & Intelligence)	.49	.001	.46	.01
Motivation	.40	.001	.40	.01
Creativity	.49	.001	.35	.05
Leadership (Emotional and Social)	.38	.01	.44	.01